Sam.l Foster.
1829
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NATIONAL DEFENCE.

A

DISCOURSE,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

ANCIENT AND HONORABLE

ARTILLERY COMPANY,

JUNE 1, 1829,

BEING THE 191ST ANNIVERSARY.

BY BERNARD WHITMAN.

CAMBRIDGE:

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1829.

At a meeting of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, June 1, 1829—Voted unanimously, that Col. Samuel Learned, Col. Samuel Chandler, Capt. H. H. Huggeford, and Lt. Col. John F. Banister, Commissioned Officers of the past year, be a committee to wait on the Rev. Bernard Whitman and return him the THANKS *of the Company for his able and eloquent discourse this day delivered before them, and request a copy for the press.*

A true extract from the records.

Attest, ZACH. G. WHITMAN, Clerk.

DISCOURSE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY,

You have invited me to address you on this anniversary. I would therefore inquire, for what purpose you have assembled in this consecrated temple? Is it to hear the angry notes of theological warfare, and to have feelings of uncharitableness aroused and confirmed? I think not. Although you belong to different denominations, and are called by the names of various sects, and have embraced different speculations on some religious subjects, and consider your peculiar opinions vastly important; yet I believe you meet this day as Christian brethren. For you remember that our ancestors came to these shores for the enjoyment of religious liberty. You also recollect that all men are solemnly bound to search the Scriptures for themselves, and abide by the result of their examinations; that others differ no more from you than you do from them; that their distinguishing views are as dear to them as yours are to you; that others have consciences to be respected as well as yourselves; that all men are fallible, and that all who fear God and work righteousness are accepted of him. And as you would not have your sincerity doubted, or your peculiar sentiments attributed to a bad heart, or be denied the Christian name and character and hopes, merely

on account of a conscientious difference in religious opinion ; neither would you prove yourselves destitute of the spirit of Christ by doing unto others what you would *not* have others do unto you. Your differences are therefore forgotten, and you unite on the common ground of the Gospel,—ground broad enough for all true believers to meet upon in peace. I sincerely respect your feelings of harmony. And God forbid that I should intentionally utter one word to disturb your Christian union.

Have you assembled to hear a discussion of party politics, and to have your resentment excited and strengthened against your political opponents ? I think not. Although you belong to the different political parties of the day, and are called by a variety of new and old political names, and have embraced different political creeds, and consider your own views really true and important; yet I believe you meet this day as American patriots. For you remember that all our citizens profess an equal attachment to our common country. And you also recollect that men of all political parties have manifested their patriotism by their deeds of wisdom and valor ; that all are equally interested in the preservation of our union and peace and liberty ; that all are entitled to equal rights in forming their judgment on national questions ; and that all are liable to mistakes and errors. And as you would deem it gross injustice to be called either fools, or knaves, or traitors, merely on account of your honest political opinions ; so, for the same reason, you would not prove yourselves destitute of justice, by bringing these charges upon your opponents. Your party feelings are therefore laid aside, and you unite on the common ground of American liberty, —ground broad enough for all patriots to meet upon in peace. I sincerely respect your harmony. And God forbid that I should intentionally utter one word to disturb your political union.

Have you assembled to cherish a contentious and warlike spirit, and to have hostile feelings enkindled and enflamed? I think not. Although you are military officers, and appear armed with implements of bloodshed, and are engaged in learning the arts of self-defence; yet I believe you meet this day as peacemakers. For you profess to be the followers of the Prince of Peace, and consequently regard all offensive wars as manifestly unchristian. You harbor no enmities against any nation under heaven; and you would rejoice to know that another drop of blood was never to be shed in human warfare. You would carefully avoid giving the slightest cause of offence to any country; and you would meekly and patiently bear insults and injuries. You would do all in your power to promote the reign of universal peace. Your daily prayer is, that nations may beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks, and learn the arts of war no more. But your knowledge of human nature, and the present degraded state of the world, forbid your expecting the speedy fulfilment of this prophecy; and as friends to your country, to the cause of good order and government, and to human liberty and happiness, you feel desirous of making seasonable and prudent preparations against all possible dangers. You now assemble in this spirit of our holy religion. And God forbid that I should intentionally utter one word inconsistent with the pacific principles of the Gospel.

If then you have assembled, neither for religious, political, nor warlike excitement; what principle has prompted your present meeting? Is it not patriotism; an ardent love of your country; a warm desire to promote its best interests? I believe this is the motive; for you are descendants of the Puritans. They wished to live on terms of amity and friendship with every tribe and nation. But the frightful noise of the savage warwhoop was soon heard around

their peaceful dwellings. Necessity compelled them to make provision for self-preservation. The band of persecuted believers soon became a band of Christian soldiers. In the very infancy of their settlement, some of the more patriotic conceived the design of associating together for mutual improvement in military tactics. That association has existed to the present time; even one hundred and ninety-one years; an *ancient* company surely. Among its members have ever been enrolled some of our most patriotic citizens, some of our most enlightened statesmen, and some of our most zealous Christians; an *honorable* company truly; and one which has rendered invaluable service in every period of our country's trials. You, gentlemen, are their present representatives. And I presume you partake of their spirit and character. I believe you are actuated by the same high and holy motives; the same desire for national prosperity and happiness; the same zeal in preparing to defend your dear-bought rights and blessings, and the same determination to maintain and perpetuate the honor of your company. Shall I not then be in harmony with your feelings, with the spirit of this anniversary, and with the design of your association, if I address you on the means of national defence? This then is the subject of discourse—NATIONAL DEFENCE. And as I lay no claims to infallibility, I have selected a text in accordance with my respect for your judgment. The passage may be found in the fifteenth verse of the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians:

"I SPEAK AS TO WISE MEN; JUDGE YE WHAT I SAY."

And God grant I may so speak as to promote the best welfare of our beloved country.

What then is national defence? Our national safety may be endangered in two ways. First, by insurrections among

ourselves, and by invasions from foreign enemies. This is a physical danger, and of course must be met with a physical defence. Secondly, our safety may be endangered by ignorance and vice among ourselves. This is a moral danger, and of course must be met with a moral defence. Consequently, national defence is of a twofold character, physical and moral.

I. In what must the *physical* defence of our nation consist?

1. Can you safely trust in a standing army for defence against physical dangers? Will this be a sufficient security against insurrections? I think not. For insurrections are generally confined either to towns, counties, districts, or states. Those who engage in them pretend to be seeking the redress of some grievance, resenting some injury, removing some oppressive burden, defending some violated constitutional principle, or securing some chartered right. Now should your army be small, and stationed in several widely different parts of our country, the insurgents might do incalculable injury, and perhaps obtain the object of their desires, before you could bring upon them an efficient detachment of your regular troops. They might, indeed, ravage a considerable portion of our land, and commit innumerable depredations, before your standing army could bring them to subjection. If then you would effect the desired safety, your army must be so numerous, that a powerful body may be encamped, if not in every county, at least in every state. But to effect this, nearly half of our young and enterprising citizens must be taken from their proper employments, and confined to the regular routine of camp duty. They must be supported at an enormous expense of money, and a lamentable sacrifice of health, and morals, and happiness. And will a free and prosperous nation, which regards with impartiality the best

welfare of all the people, ever resort to such an absurd measure for the preservation of her internal tranquillity?

But this is not all. Would a standing army prove a sufficient security against invasions from foreign enemies? I think not. For whatever nation should declare war upon us, would endeavor to do us all possible injury. They would aim to plunder and burn our seaports, and the neighboring villages. And what security would a small army present, scattered along the shore from Maine to Georgia. Little indeed. They would fly before the invading foe like autumn leaves in a tornado. Our only safety in a standing army then, would be, in having it so large, that an efficient detachment might be stationed at every port into which the enemy could enter. But where would you obtain sufficient numbers for such a purpose? or who would furnish the means of their support? or what would your national blessings be worth, if preserved at such an enormous expenditure of money, and morals, and happiness? Not only so; is not a standing army inconsistent with our political and religious principles? Should not the sovereign power be in the hands of a free people? Would this power be secure in connexion with a standing army? Would not such an arrangement give a rash President, or a hasty Congress, the means of depriving you of your dearest rights? Would it not furnish the temptation for some popular military leader to steal the hearts of the soldiery, and revolutionize the country? And what effectual resistance could the sovereign people make, without arms and ammunition, and surrounded by well disciplined troops? Can you find Christian legislators who would vote to have our active, industrious, virtuous youth taken from the endearments of peaceful and domestic life, and exposed to the contaminating influence of the camp, and educated for no other purpose but warfare? Will an independent na-

tion ever resort to this means of physical defence? I conclude it will not; and consequently, I believe that we cannot put our trust in a standing army for security against either insurrections or invasions; because a small one would be insufficient for either purpose, and a large one would eventually ruin the country.

2. Would you place all our arms and military stores in public arsenals, and rest secure without any militia? I believe such a measure would not only leave us in a state of great insecurity, but actually provoke insurrections and invasions. If, at any time, or in any part of the country, a few disaffected individuals were disposed to rebel, they would possess the power and the means of doing immense injury. For they would surely have prudence enough to conceal their project, until they had secured all the public magazines in the vicinity. And if the combination should be sufficiently extensive, a minority of the people would have the power of revolutionizing the whole country. Temptations would also be held out for unprincipled demagogues to collect a mob, secure the public arms, and disturb the peace of villages, and towns, and cities. And in either case, what could a majority of numbers effect, without military stores and warlike instruments, and without any means of securing a speedy supply? They must inevitably surrender on the best terms they could obtain, in case of a large rebellion; and in a small one, they must suffer much evil before they could possibly achieve the victory. So that we cannot feel safe under such an arrangement.

I believe the matter would be still worse in case of an invasion. For no nation will be so foolish as to expect to reduce us to subjection, while we remain united among ourselves, and prepared to defend our rights and blessings at the expense of our lives. Whatever nation should wish

to accomplish our subjugation, would begin by creating a division among ourselves, and securing a party friendly to their projects. Such a party being created, secret correspondence could be carried on, and arrangements made, and plans matured, and measures adopted for securing our public warlike stores. And what effectual resistance could you make, when a foreign foe had invaded your shores, and a foreign faction had secured all your arsenals? None at all. France readily triumphed over the Spaniards, because she had a French party in Spain. And so will it be, should we ever be deprived of our liberties. And for this reason, I always regret that any thing should be said by our orators, on the national anniversary, or in our journals, to create either a French or an English party in our country. We have nothing to fear, while united, from any nation; and we ought, therefore, most carefully to avoid every cause of division. I must therefore conclude, that disbanding the militia, and placing the military stores in arsenals, would not only leave us insecure, but actually provoke both insurrections and invasions. And in this opinion I am not alone. A similar sentiment was advanced by the venerated Lafayette, while standing on the ever-memorable battle-ground of Lexington. And on this subject I should value his opinion more than that of any other man on earth. Consequently, we cannot trust to such a measure for physical defence.

3. If then you cannot feel secure, either with a standing army, or with having all our arms and military stores in public arsenals, what means of physical defence would you adopt? Must not our main dependence be on our militia?—in having every able-bodied citizen of proper age armed and equipped for military service, acquainted with the more important military tactics, and ready to appear in defence of good order, or national liberty, at a moment's

warning? I believe this will furnish an effectual security. For it is this impression more than all things else,—the impression that every man is a soldier,—that the majority, if not of the county or state, yet of the country, will be found on the side of order, law, and government; that no disaffected faction can reasonably entertain the least hope of ultimate victory; and that nothing but disgrace and punishment can eventually attend such an undertaking. I say it is this impression, more than all things else, that has hitherto saved us from insurrections, and must continue to preserve us from their baneful influence. And in case of an actual rising, either of a smaller or larger number, the insurgents must labor under the most serious disadvantages. For they must be conscious, that though their complaint may be just, their means of obtaining redress are altogether unlawful and unjustifiable. This consciousness would deter them from making the first onset upon their neighbors and acquaintances, who had shouldered their muskets for the support of good order and government. And they would be the first to surrender, because they must be disheartened by the reflection, that the majority would certainly triumph. They would stand a much better chance for success in either of the other supposed cases. For they would feel little or no reluctance in attacking an army of hireling strangers; and their courage would be animated by some hope of victory. And in the other case, suppose they could secure the public arsenals, their object would be nearly accomplished. For these reasons, I believe we must depend upon our militia for defence against insurrections.

I would say the same in regard to invasions. Our defence against foreign enemies must be in our militia. Other nations regard us as a country of soldiers. They believe that every strong and healthy man is well equipped for

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military service ; well drilled in military manœuvres, and ever ready to fight in defence of his liberties. Whether this be the exact truth or not,—whether our militia do actually make any improvement in military tactics or not, is not now the question. So long as these things are believed abroad, no nation will think of plotting for our destruction. For there is nothing which they so much fear, as an army of freemen, proprietors of the soil and its attendant blessings, fighting for their natural rights, and for all they hold dear on earth. And in case of an actual attack, we cannot be conquered. No ; so long as we remain virtuous and united among ourselves ; so long as we have a powerful navy ready for active service at a short notice ; so long as we keep just men enough in all our forts to preserve them in proper repair ; so long as every able-bodied man is a courageous soldier, we cannot be conquered. What wonders did our militia perform in our glorious revolution ! At the commencement of hostilities, all were militia. But they soon acquired the arts of warfare, and nobly defended the land of their fathers. And when we consider the great disadvantages under which they then labored, we need harbor no fears but our increased numbers and resources will continue to preserve our independence. For you may rest assured, that virtuous freemen, contending for their civil and literary blessings, their families and their altars, can never be enslaved. They may be destroyed, but never subjugated. I conclude, therefore, that so long as we maintain our present physical defence, we are in little or no danger either from insurrections or invasions. And I must believe that we are to look for national defence against physical dangers, not to a standing army, not to military stores in public arsenals, but mainly to our militia.

I would say a few words on our present militia system. It is doubtless attended with serious evils. These every patriot must lament. But I believe they may be removed with great benefit to the institution. Some companies and regiments have already voted to dispense with all intoxicating liquors on days of parade. This may be done by all. The trainings may also be so ordered that no idlers shall be attracted. And thus the moral dangers of the system be obviated. It is also charged with being expensive, burdensome, and unequal in its operations. This is doubtless true in some degree. And I believe a reformation of these evils is a more difficult undertaking. I believe this, because I know that distinguished individuals have given their attention to this subject for many years, and still have not been able to propose a system of unexceptionable character. I also know that our state and national assemblies have given this subject some consideration, and as yet have produced no satisfactory results. I hope, however, they will persevere in this good work, until the militia are secured their equal rights, until they are relieved of their unequal burdens, until a plan is adopted which shall give general satisfaction,—a plan which shall secure all the desired benefits, and at the same time secure the respect of every patriotic American.

Let us pursue this course, and we shall continue to walk in the safe and prosperous steps of our Pilgrim fathers. They wished to establish a religious community. They determined to avoid the rock on which most other nations had been wrecked,—that of paying more attention to physical than moral defence. For what is the history of other times and other countries, but a record of warlike preparations, and military leaders, and sanguinary wars. How ready have people ever been, from the most savage to the most civilized, to bestow the highest honors on victorious

chieftains. Had the immortal Washington been as unprincipled as he was brave, he might as easily have been crowned king of North America, as inaugurated President of the United States, notwithstanding the virtue and integrity of our people. The same principle is still in operation, especially in the states of South America. This dangerous rule, our forefathers desired to invert. They meant to have the military in subservience to the civil authority. Hence you find that in every stage of our country's history, many of our civil rulers have also been military officers. I rejoice to hear this ancient and sacred principle of our ancestors echoed by the present chief magistrate of our nation. I rejoice that such institutions as your Company, and the Military Academy at West Point, continue to educate officers for seasons of emergency. Persevere in the honorable course of your predecessors, and you will have the satisfaction, which they enjoyed for many successive generations, of seeing your nation safe, prosperous, and happy. Such are my views of the physical defence of our nation. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

II. In what must consist the *moral defence* of our nation? We are in much greater danger from ourselves than from any foreign enemy. Ignorance and vice constitute the moral danger of our nation. Intelligence and virtue must therefore constitute our moral defence. The moral character of any free people will generally manifest itself in the choice of their public officers. When the majority become involved in darkness and depravity, their rulers will generally partake of the same character. Now the essence of republicanism consists in having the most worthy and best qualified persons in all public offices. In order, then, to make our moral dangers and their appropriate remedies more apparent, I will say, that we are

in danger of not having our best men in all public offices. And,

1. The licentiousness of the press may be one means of preventing our having our best men in all public offices. This evil has been increasing for several years. And now, many of our public servants are frequently treated in the most unrighteous manner. The deficiencies and failings of their early days are raked up and spread forth for public gaze. Their common foibles and imperfections are magnified into serious crimes. Their services are reviewed with the most bitter and malignant prejudice. Their valuable labors are regarded as the fruits of gross selfishness. Base insinuations concerning their integrity and purity are thrown out with a spirit of utter moral recklessness. Wilful falsehoods are invented and circulated to prevent their election, or wound their feelings. And they are thrust from office to make room for new candidates. Even those, calling themselves Christian Ministers, have publicly denounced some of our most eminent and upright civil fathers; they have accused them of partiality and injustice and sacrilege in the administration of the laws; they have endeavored to excite against them a popular odium merely on account of their honest theological opinions; and for this same cause they have slandered the first literary institution of our country, and in the most wanton and inhuman manner attacked the character of some of its most distinguished officers. But this is not the worst of the case. Public journals, calling themselves religious, have exhibited repeated specimens of wilful misrepresentation and falsehood, malicious slander and defamation, and a persecuting, savage disposition.

Now if you permit this evil to increase, can you expect your best men to labor for the public welfare? Will the honors and emoluments of office be sufficient to compen-

sate high-minded, well-educated, virtuous citizens for all the scurrility and abuse which may be poured upon them and their families? Will their patriotism be sufficient to induce them to submit patiently to unprovoked and unmerited indignity and insult merely for the sake of serving a thankless body of fellow creatures? No, it will not; it ought not. And you may depend upon the truth of my words, when I affirm, that unless some check is speedily put upon the licentiousness of the press, and the pulpit, and the tongue, you will not be able much longer to obtain the services of your best men for public business. They will not serve an ungrateful and defaming community. You will be able to obtain those, and those only, who have little or no reputation to lose; little or no honorable feeling to be wounded; little or no means of subsistence; little or no moral principle; and who will serve you just so long and just so faithfully, as they can serve their own interests; and no longer and no better.

Gentlemen, will you not provide some remedy against this threatening danger. I would not indeed plead for a licensed press. By no means. The freedom of the press is the safeguard of our liberties, the patron of all truth, the defence of our dearest blessings. Let the press then ever be free, bold, independent; but let it never become licentious. Let it be free to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in a Christian manner, on all public measures, and on the moral and official conduct of all public men. But never let it be free to circulate the malicious insinuations of the ambitious partisan, the wilful falsehoods of unprincipled enemies, or the reckless assertions of anonymous, hireling scribblers. So also of the pulpit. Ever let it be free, bold, and independent; but never let it become licentious. Let it be free to utter the honest convictions of every preacher on any moral or religious

subject. But never let it be free to speak the unchristian reproaches of the political partisan, or the uncharitable denunciations of the bigoted; let it never be converted into the coward castle of the religious defamer, or the ignorant pretender. Let both pulpit and press be confined to their respective spheres of duty; and let their growing licentiousness be checked by the voice of public opinion. Yes, public opinion is the only effectual remedy for this growing evil. You may talk of your laws; but what is their use? There is a law concerning profaneness; and is not the law of libel fast approaching to the same state of utter uselessness? Let every person then, who seriously regards the welfare of his country, be heartily engaged in reforming this alarming wickedness. Let no paper, no journal, no publication be patronized, which is regardless of the truth, which is given to personal abuse, which is scattering far and wide an illiberal, exclusive, bitter spirit; and which would destroy the pleasant associations and kindly sympathies of social and Christian intercourse. Let those be well supported which speak the truth as in the fear of God, which are devoted to the best interests of the people, which regard the rights of others as sacred, and which would promote its ends only by fair and honest and Christian means. In this way, and in this way only, can this threatening danger be averted, and the services of our best men still secured.

2. Party spirit may be another means of preventing our having our best men in all public offices. Our population is composed of excitable materials. We have repeatedly been divided into warm political and religious parties. Neighbors and friends have been arrayed in opposition to one another; and they have frequently manifested towards each other a bitter, uncharitable, condemning temper. Now in all such excitements, the majority of most parties are governed rather by passion and prejudice, than by rea-

son, judgment, and religion. Consequently, they usually promote to office, not the best qualified, but the most zealous partisans. I trust no one will take offence, if I illustrate this position by some of the appointments of the present administration. I presume all will admit, that in many instances, men of far higher qualifications might have been selected from the same party. But the rewards of office have evidently been bestowed in these cases, not according to the real merits of the candidates, but according to the zeal manifested in the presidential contest. And this is too commonly the case with all political parties. Unless, therefore, some measures are taken to check our frequent and foolish party excitements, I fear some question or other will keep us in a constant fever. And so sure as party spirit rages, the majority of our public officers will be selected for their party zeal, and not for their proper qualifications for the official duties of their station. Men of moderate abilities, and small acquirements, and no fixed moral principle, and much impudence and intrigue, will be always ready to put themselves forward in such seasons; while the more modest, better qualified, and more patriotic of the prevailing party will be left in obscurity.

Gentlemen, what remedy will you provide for this increasing danger? Let every man act independently on all subjects, and we have nothing to fear from parties. For I believe we are all friends to our country, and desirous of doing all in our power for the promotion of her best welfare. But on the various questions which are continually arising under a free government; there must necessarily be a diversity of opinion. And if all men act independently, if they form their opinions according to the evidence presented, and not according to the dictates of others, or their own prepossessions and prejudices, no permanent parties can exist; and no evils can result from

those which are daily forming, if those who compose them will also exhibit a Christian behavior. Nay, such parties are a real benefit; for their free discussions must elicit truth. Let us then have parties, but let them be constantly changing their adherents as the questions change,—parties formed by evidence, and not by prejudice or bribery. Let us have a railroad and an anti-railroad party; a tariff and an anti-tariff party; an Adams and a Jackson party; and let that party in either or any case be successful which can best support its claims by sound argument. But let every man act like a Christian, in whatever party he is ranked. Let no one condemn others for exercising the same rights which he claims for himself. And let each party select its best men for all public offices; not its most noisy, zealous, unprincipled men; but its most honest, most capable, most patriotic. Our danger does not consist in having rulers taken from this or that particular party; for there are always good men enough in most parties; but in having the less qualified men of all parties. Let every man then have independence and self-respect enough to act according to his honest convictions on all questions of a civil, literary, political, and religious nature; and we shall be delivered from the evils of party spirit; and still continue to have our best men in all public offices.

3. Attempts to unite civil and religious affairs may be another means of preventing our having our best men in all public offices. I do not say, that the whole body of any religious denomination are desirous of uniting church and state; for this I do not believe. But I do say, that many individuals in certain sects are making this attempt; for we have the evidence in their own writings. I do say, that all such would exclude from public office every man that refused to subscribe to certain theological opinions. I do say, that this principle has been carried to the polls,

and that votes have been given according to the religious views of the candidates. I do say, that such men are endeavoring to destroy religious liberty, by promises and threats, by denunciations and exhortations, by patronage and persecution. And I do believe, that if this most unrighteous, most abominable practice should continue to increase, our free institutions will be eventually ruined. For men will be selected for office, not on account of their qualifications, but on account of their religious opinions. When such men come into office, they will be more engaged in promoting the ambitious views of their denomination, than the best interests of their constituents or their country. We should have in our public stations, few but religious partisans of the various Christian sects,—the worst of all partisans. Our civil affairs would be administered, not with a view to the benefit of the whole people, but with the design of promoting the interests of the dominant religious party. Our public assemblies would present a scene of disorder, bitterness, reviling, and angry contention; for the religious partisans of the present day possess very little of the spirit of their heavenly Master. And should any one sect, or any combination of sects, ever succeed in establishing a national religion, then farewell to our social and domestic enjoyment; farewell to our freedom and independence; and farewell to Christian morality. But I have no fears of such an event. The majority of the people may be depended upon in this emergency. If a late attempt at exclusion on account of religious opinion could not succeed in the general assembly of Connecticut, we may rest easy as to all the other states. And I have no doubt nine out of ten of those who remonstrated against the stopping of the mail on the sabbath, are as desirous and do as much to promote a proper observance of the Lord's day, as the most zealous petitioners for such an act; but

they feared the ultimate consequences of permitting the first link to be forged in what they considered the chain of spiritual slavery.

How then can the attempts for the union of civil and religious affairs be defeated? Let every man obey the simplest, the plainest command of Jesus, and there will be no attempts at exclusion from office on account of theological opinions; there will be no attempts to establish a national religion, and no compulsory measures will be adopted for converting others to our creeds. This is the divine precept: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them." Now is there a man in our country, one who deserves the name of a man, who would wish to be excluded from civil offices on account of his religious opinions?—who would wish to be deprived of the means of an honest subsistence because he served God according to the dictate of his conscience?—who would wish to be denounced as a dangerous and wicked heretic, because the arguments by which he defended his Christian belief could not be answered?—and who would wish to be directed in all his courses by the zealous leaders of any party? No. Why then will any one attempt to do unto others as he would *not* have others do unto him? The moment you deny any one a single right which you claim for yourself, that moment you disobey the divine command of your Saviour; and in the sight of Heaven are as guilty as if your act had been openly immoral. All the evils that have disgraced the Christian church, have arisen from disobedience to this sacred precept. Our forefathers came to this country for the express purpose of enjoying religious liberty; but no sooner had they secured the power, than they condemned, persecuted, and even murdered those who differed from their human creeds. Much of this depraved spirit of the Pilgrims still remains in our land. It

is astonishing that the increasing light of two centuries has not made us wiser and better. It is truly astonishing that we cannot learn to obey the plainest, the simplest commands of our acknowledged Master. It is lamentable that Christians cannot learn to do unto others as they would have others do unto them; that they cannot allow unto others the same rights and privileges and claims. I do wish the public mind could be aroused on this subject; for there is no question more important to our national welfare; and there is no cause in which I would so soon gird on the weapons of war, as in defence of religious liberty. Should the pious Jew erect his synagogue on one side of my door, he should worship the God of his fathers in peace. And should the devout Mussulman build his mosque on the other, he should be protected in his conscientious worship. And should an arm be raised to compel either of them to offer his devotions in my church, or to deprive either of them of any office of honor or trust or profit, merely on account of his honest religious views, I would strike that arm to the ground, even though it were the arm of my dearest friend, and even though I should lose my life in the undertaking. I would indeed use argument to convince all who differed from me, of their errors; and I would listen to any argumentative reply. But I should look upon every man who would control the consciences and opinions and votes of others, either by force or fear,—who would use any weapon for the propagation of his religious views but argument and persuasion, as an enemy to the rights of man, as an enemy to his country, and as a disgrace to his professed Master. Let this feeling be strengthened in every breast, and religion will be left where it ought ever to have been left, between every man and his Maker. Let every man then endeavor to obey the plain commands of Jesus, and religious liberty

will be established ; our country will no longer be disgraced by any species of persecution on account of honest differences of opinion, and we shall still have our best men in all public offices.

4. Want of a proper degree of education among the people may be another means of preventing our having our best men in all public offices. With all our literary advantages, we have much remaining ignorance. Such is now the state of society in our country, that a considerable excitement can be produced on almost any subject with very little exertion. Let a few zealots in any cause determine to accomplish some favorite object; let them call their undertaking by some good name ; let them appeal to the people in behalf of patriotism or benevolence or religion, and they will secure a large number of worthy, virtuous citizens; although the enterprise should prove to be absurd, unreasonable, or even unrighteous. And why is this? Because these persons are honest and upright; they are unsuspicious, and therefore do not examine the proposed question with carefulness ; they have not been accustomed to exercise their reason. They listen to the solemn assertions, and zealous exhortations, and earnest persuasions, and sophistical reasonings, and misrepresentations of their leaders. And although they make some allowances for party prejudice, yet, before they are aware, their feelings and affections are enlisted. In this manner, they are frequently induced to vote for the candidates of the party, and thus become the tools of artful, designing demagogues. Now, if their education had been of a higher order, they could not have been so easily and so strongly excited. They would have reasoned on the subject, and received with caution the inflammatory speeches of the leaders, and examined the arguments on the other side of of the question, and looked at the probable motives of the

chief actors, and inquired if they were influenced by no selfish or party purposes. By pursuing such a course, they would have avoided all extremes of opinion and conduct. Should popular ignorance increase, would not our moral dangers thicken? Would it not give power to ambitious and unprincipled men to influence our popular elections, and thus prevent the choice of our best men? And ought not some measures to be adopted for the reformation of this threatening evil?

What defence then will you make against this danger? Must you not increase the means of public education? Our present advantages are indeed great. But we must remember, that some of our states provide no public schools; and that many of their inhabitants can neither read nor write. And in other states, many who enjoy better opportunities, never make any use of their knowledge of reading and writing after leaving school. In fact, there is one capital error in our present method of instruction. The children are not taught to *think*. Their *minds* are not put in operation. They never learn to reason correctly, and judge for themselves; and thus many depend on others for their opinions on all important subjects. And the principal reason why our present means are not better improved and increased, is the apathy of the great majority of the people. They do not feel sufficient interest in this subject. They do not realize the importance of having the rising generation more highly educated than their predecessors. They need an awakening. And it becomes those in every place, who are already excited, to persevere in their endeavors to arouse others. In a country like ours, where our civil, social, religious, and domestic blessings depend for their existence on the intelligence and virtue of the people, no means should be spared for their education. How much to our praise would it be, if every man was qualified for

most of our civil offices, and every woman competent to instruct in all the branches usually taught in female academies? All this might be effected without any increase of poverty; nay, with an increase of public prosperity. And this should be our national pride,—not that we have a fertile soil, and a healthful atmosphere, and majestic lakes, and mighty rivers, and a free government, and a wealthy population; but that all our inhabitants are intelligent and virtuous, highly educated and eminently righteous. And let every man who would cherish such a Christian pride, continue to speak, and write, and publish, until all our children enjoy the means of obtaining a higher degree of education. Then all our citizens will be well qualified for civil offices, and our best qualified men will continue to be elected.

5. Finally. Want of Christian morality may be another means of preventing our having our best men in all public offices. You are aware that some of our politicians have adopted this maxim as a principle of conduct: "*All is fair in politics.*" Its meaning with them is this: Men may adopt any means whatever to secure their own or their friends' election to office. They may obtain patronage, either by proclaiming their own qualifications, or defaming their opponents. They may buy votes either with intoxicating liquor, or promises of reward, or threats of persecution. They may influence public sentiment either by malicious misrepresentation or wiful falsehood. But this is not all. The same licentious maxim has been introduced in some degree into the business of life. The principles of fair and honorable dealing have been frequently violated. And the common excuse is this: All is fair in trade; defraud, deceive, take any measures for the increase of property; and so long as you can escape the laws of the land, all is well. And even this is not the worst of the case. Religious partisans are

practising on the same abominable principle. The undisguised language of their conduct is this: All is fair in religion; the end sanctifies the means; increase your party at the expense of truth, and social and domestic peace, and gospel order, and the most important Christian graces. And it is the living truth, that measures have been adopted in this Commonwealth, for swelling the numbers of a sect, which would disgrace any political faction. Now you know that our national security depends on the virtue of the people. And if this most wicked principle of action should be adopted by a majority of our citizens, we are politically and morally ruined. For what are your laws, your constitution, your declaration of independence? They are mere paper records. And the breath of an unprincipled people may scatter them to the four corners of the earth. Let it once become the general sentiment, that all is fair which the will of the majority can accomplish, and you have no means of preventing the destruction of your dearest rights; for profligate men would be promoted to office for the very purpose of accomplishing some unconstitutional deed. And thus one step after another might be taken, until we become enslaved to a licentious mob. And when you recollect the feverish eagerness for offices which has been frequently manifested of late, and the reckless measures for obtaining them which have occasionally been adopted, I think you have reason to be alarmed.

Gentlemen, how will you meet this danger? You can effect its destruction in but one way. You must cause all such persons to regulate their principles and actions according to the standard of Christian morality. According to this divine standard, nothing is fair but what is right,—morally right,—right in the sight of God. To endeavor to do the right and avoid the wrong in every thing, in one

thing as much as in another, is Christian righteousness. And whoever knowingly departs from the right in any one thing,—in politics, trade, or religion,—is so far destitute of the Christian character. And as our free government can exist no longer than it is based upon Christian morality, it becomes every patriot to be zealously engaged in perfecting holiness. We should never separate religion and morality. There is no religion without morality. So far as a man is destitute of morality, so far is he destitute of the Christian religion. We must therefore aim to do right in all things. We must endeavor to promote that righteousness, which exalteth a nation.

We are highly distinguished for our moral, benevolent, and religious societies; many of them are called national and American. I believe another national society is needed more than all the others combined. It should consist of all who would conscientiously endeavor to do morally right in every thing. It might be made up of some from all religious parties; and of some from no religious party. This would be just such a party as Christ Jesus came to form on earth. Yes; he came to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. It might be called the American Society of Christians. And what constitutes a Christian? Let our Saviour answer: "Ye are my disciples if ye do whatever I command you." Such are my views of our national dangers and means of defence. I do not say that these evils have yet operated to any considerable extent; but I do believe they have given unequivocal proof of their existence. And I conceive that it is the duty of every friend of free institutions to watch the signs of the times, and give the warning of approaching dangers. This I have endeavored to do in the spirit of freedom, but not in the spirit of party. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

Perhaps you will now ask, if I really entertain fears for our national safety. I must confess I do; not that I have any fears of a foreign enemy; but I fear that we cannot preserve ourselves sufficiently intelligent and virtuous to secure our internal peace and tranquillity. And how can I avoid such fears, when I read the history of other republics, and when I witness the increase of those vices among ourselves, which proved their destruction. But I will also confess that my hopes of national security far outweigh my fears. For I think we are fast approaching the crisis of our country's danger. And if we survive another half century, and increase in knowledge and goodness, our warfare is accomplished, our immortality is established. My hopes are founded on the increased means of mental, and moral, and religious instruction; on our infant and sabbath schools; on our public literary seminaries; on our agricultural associations and mechanics' institutes; on our freedom from a standing army, and our security in a virtuous militia; on the spirit of free inquiry which is abroad in the community; on the great revival of pure and undefiled religion which is now beginning in all parts of our country; and especially on the good sense and sound morality of the great body of our people. Only let them open their eyes to the moral dangers which threaten our free institutions, and our safety is secured. Let us then continue to promote our best men to all public offices. Let them be selected according to the rule of the venerated Jefferson. When any candidate is proposed, you have only to inquire, Is he honest?—is he capable?—is he attached to the constitution. Yes; let us have honest men; those who cannot be bribed; those who will make up their judgments on evidence; those who will conscientiously endeavor to do morally right in every question that comes under their consideration. Let us have capa-

ble men; those who are qualified for the duties of their station; those who will do the most public business in the least time, and in the best manner. Let us have men attached to the constitution; those who would not sacrifice a constitutional principle on any selfish or party altar; those who would lay down their lives in support of constitutional rights. And the question should never be asked: Is he liberal or orthodox?—is he a Catholic or a Jew?—is he masonic or anti-masonic?—is he of the exclusive or the amalgamation party? For whoever asks these questions, and regulates his suffrage according to his party feelings, takes the first unconstitutional step of excluding a man from public office merely on account of his honest opinions. No; let the only inquiry be: Is he the most honest candidate?—the best qualified?—the most patriotic? Let such men be chosen, no matter by what religious or political names they are called, and our public business will be faithfully transacted; and our national prosperity will continue to increase.

One word more, and I have done. You will not accuse me of departing from the spirit of my profession, in presenting before you the moral dangers which threaten our national security. I believe I have spoken in accordance with the spirit and teachings of the Gospel. For what constitutes the religion of Jesus? Does it consist in disputing and wrangling?—in condemning opponents on account of their opinions, and dividing families and societies?—in spreading through the community a bitter, exclusive, defaming spirit? No, nothing of the kind. This is but the abuse of Christianity. Does it consist in calling Christ, Master, and neglecting to exhibit his spirit or obey his commands; in regulating the motives and actions by the principles of selfishness, party spirit, covetousness, or licentiousness? No, while such have a name to live, they are

dead,—the form without the power of godliness. Does it consist in a scrupulous observance of days and ordinances; in prayers and meetings; in excitements and combinations? No; these are but the means of religion; and they may be observed without producing the desired end. Who were ever more religious than the Pharisees, and who were ever more immoral? In what then does the religion of Jesus consist? In living soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. In doing right in all things. And it is as much a part of this system to deal honestly, as to pray fervently; to speak the truth, as to love God. It extends to the heart, regulates the motives and affections, and produces good fruit in every concern of life. And it is for the want of this Christian principle, that we have so much iniquity in the various commercial, civil, political, and religious transactions of the world. And if our country is ever ruined, it will be for the want of moral virtue; the determination to do exactly right in all things. It is nothing but the practical religion of Jesus which can save us from destruction, and render us that peculiar nation whose God is the Lord. For it has pleased our heavenly Father to send his Son to be a leader and commander of our people. We must obey his orders and march in his steps, if we would conquer our spiritual enemies. Our faith in him must cause us to practise what he has pronounced right in all cases, or we shall never receive the crown of victory. And it is nothing but this endeavor at unreserved obedience which can ensure his promised salvation. No; you may pretend to believe something concerning Christ and his religion; but so long as your faith does not essentially and prevailingly influence your hearts and conduct, you may as well expect Christian salvation from the belief of a Hindoo. You may talk loudly and learnedly about the Gospel, and contend earnestly for some of its peculiar doc-

trines; but there is not always the most religion where there is the most talk and contention about it. Thorns make a louder crackling in the fire than more solid fuel, but send forth less heat. You may extol the beauty and harmony of your religious creed; but it is of no service to you, unless its principles are reduced to practice, and its purifying power manifested in your lives. A tree may be beautiful when decked with leaves and flowers, but truly valuable when loaded with healthful fruit. You may make a public profession of religion, and render some unsteady and defective obedience to the commands of Christ; but that obedience which is not habitual and holy, will not entitle you to his promised reward. That needle which continually trembles and deviates from the true point of the compass, will not guide the mariner in safety to his destined haven. Neither can that Christian soldier, whose heart is continually attracted from the great Captain of his salvation, by the pleasures, and cares, and disputes of this world, rationally expect to reach in safety the mansions of eternal blessedness.

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